

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Examiner's FINAL Office Action of August 19, 2008 issued in relation to the present Patent Application, the Applicant submits the Remarks below.

Claims 1-9 are pending in the Application. Claim 1 is an independent claim.

Regarding 35 USC 103 Rejections

Claims 1-4 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Machida (US 7,002,702) in view of Iizuka (US 6,771,385).

Claims 5-6 and 8-9 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Machida in view of Iizuka, and further in view of known prior art.

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner asserts that PC 104 and printer 105 of Machida discloses a plurality of consumers of one or more common resources, and refers to column 19, lines 1-10. Column 19, lines 1-10 describes, with reference to Fig. 28, device log information of devices. Any one of the PCs shown in FIG. 1 serves as a management server. It is the PC serving as the management server which controls the device log information. Such managed devices may for example include a printer, and Fig. 28 specifically shows an example of a printer log information 2870.

Column 19, lines 10-23 is used for supporting that Machida teaches broadcasting from each consumer (which are the PCs of Machida) to each of the other consumers a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed, asserting that the consumed resources is the amount of CMYK toners consumed. Column 19, lines 10-23 discloses that, associated with the name of a printer, the (cumulative) number of logs is stored (2882). The detailed log information includes toner consumption amount, etc. Column 19, lines 21-23 clearly state that *"The toner consumption amount indicates toner consumption amount information sent from the printer every finish of a printing job in the printer"*. Thus, Machida teaches that the toner consumption amount (which is the value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed) is sent from the printer to the management server. Therefore, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Machida fails to teach broadcasting from each consumer to each of the other consumers a value indicative of an amount of the one or more resources consumed. For Machida to teach the same, Machida would have to teach that each PC or printer broadcasts to each other PC or printer the amount of toner consumed. However, Machida only discloses the printer sending the toner consumption amount to the single management server only. The log information is updated and controlled in the hard disk of the management server only.

Thus, in view of the foregoing, Machida also fails to teach receiving the broadcasted values at each of the consumers from the other consumers. The toner consumption amount is only received by the management server.

Column 19, lines 25-40 is used as support for asserting that Machida also discloses storing, in each consumer, a record of the values that the consumer broadcasted and the values received from the other consumers. Column 19, lines 25-40 discloses that the latest log information is updated every time each printer on the network executes a job. When a new print or copy job is selected on one of the PCs and designating a specific printer for performing that job, the management server sends to that one PC the printer log information

of the selected printer. The PC where the job was selected uses the printer log information to decide whether or not the job can be executed with the current toner amount.

In the claimed invention each of the consumers broadcasts to each of the other consumers a value indicative of an amount of the resources consumed, and each consumer stores a record of the total amount the resources consumed. Thus, at any one time each of the consumers has stored a record of the total amount the resources consumed. The record is not stored on one consumer only, as is the case in Machida where only the management server stores the printer log information, as that requires the record to be sent to other consumers when such consumers wish to use the joint resource, as is the case in Machida where the printer log information is sent to the PC where the print or copy job is requested.

Thus, Machida teaches away from the claimed invention by not storing a record at each consumer, but only at the management server.

Iizuka also fails to teach those features.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the 35 USC 103(a) rejection of claim 1 have been traversed. The 35 USC 103(a) rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn as claim 1 is allowable over the references as applied by the Examiner. Claims 2 to 9 are dependent on allowable claim 1, and are allowable for at least that reason.

CONCLUSION

Allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Very respectfully,

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